

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINSHA 04837 01 OF 02 231817Z
ACTION SS-25

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O P 231730Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3711

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LAGOS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KINSHASA 4837

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MOPS CG

SUBJECT: SHABA INVASION: CONSULTATION WITH MOBUTU

1. SUMMARY: DURING MEETING MAY 22 AT KOLWEZI, PRESIDENT MOBUTU SAID THAT FIGHTING IN SHABA SHOULD BE FINISHED BY END OF THIS WEEK AND THAT MOROCCAN FORCES SHOULD ALL BE HOME BY JUNE 15 AT LATEST. HE SAID ANGOLANS, ACTING HE BELIEVED ON SOVIETS' BEHEST, HAD PROPOSED THAT CONGOLESE REPLACE NIGERIANS AS MEDIATORS, AND INDICATED THAT ZAIRE WOULD NOT OBJECT. MOBUTU ALSO CLAIMED TO HAVE INFORMATION REVEALING THAT CUBANS WANTED TO PURSUE INVASION OF ZAIRE BUT WERE RESTRAINED BY SOVIETS. WHILE REAFFIRMING HIS CONTINUING FRIENDSHIP FOR US, MOBUTU REITERATED HIS DISAPPOINTMENT IN OUR FAILURE TO GIVE FULL SUPPORT TO ZAIRE WHEN IT WAS ATTACKED. HE ONCE AGAIN EXPRESSED DISMAY AT THE CONFUSION HE CLAIMED HAS BEEN CREATED BY OUR MANY, SOMETIMES CONFLICTING, PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON AFRICA. END SUMMARY.

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2. HAVING FLOWN TO KOLWEZI THAT MORNING, I WAS RECEIVED BY MOBUTU AFTERNOON MAY 22 AT HIS PROVISIONAL PRESIDENTIAL RESIDENCE. MOBUTU WAS DRESSED IN COMBAT UNIFORM, AS WERE NGUZA (WHO SAT IN ON OUR MEETING) AND ALL OTHER GOZ OFFICIALS PRESENT IN THE AREA. MOBUTU SEEMED RELAXED AND SELF-CONFIDENT, OBVIOUSLY ENJOYING THE MOMENT OF MILITARY VICTORY AND THE PARADE OF

FOREIGN DIGNITARIES (LIBERIAN FOREIGN MINISTER THAT MORNING, THE MOROCCAN THE DAY BEFORE) WHO WERE COMING TO EXTEND CONGRATULATIONS AND SUPPORT.

3. I TOLD MOBUTU I HAD ASKED TO SEE HIM PRIMARILY TO EXCHANGE VIEWS PRIOR TO MY RETURN TO WASHINGTON LATER IN THE WEEK TO RESUME MY CONSULTATIONS ABORTED IN MARCH BECAUSE OF THE SHABA INVASION. I NOTED THAT A LOT HAD HAPPENED DURING THE INTERVENING TWO MONTHS AND I WAS PLEASED THAT ZAIRE'S SECURITY AND UNITY HAD BEEN PRESERVED. I SAID I WAS ALSO IMPRESSED BY THE WIDE-SPREAD SUPPORT ZAIRE HAD RECEIVED FROM OTHER AFRICAN STATES -- A CLEAR INDICATION NOT ONLY OF THEIR COMMON CONCERN FOR MAINTAINING TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY BUT THEIR WILLINGNESS TO HELP THEIR AFRICAN FRIENDS WHOSE INTEGRITY IS THREATENED.

4. MOBUTU SAID THE WAR WAS VIRTUALLY OVER. HIS FORCES HAD DRIVEN TO THE ANGOLAN BORDER AND ENABLED HIM TO CELEBRATE MAY 20 (MPR HOLIDAY) BY PERSONALLY INSPECTING THE KEY BORDER TOWN OF DILOLO. ALL THAT REMAINED WAS CLEANING UP THE SANDOA-KAPANGA REGION, WHICH SHOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED IN THE NEXT 2-3 DAYS WITHOUT DIFFICULTY. THEN, PROBABLY NEXT WEEKEND, MOBUTU WOULD RETURN TO KINSHASA AND GET ON WITH THE AFFAIRS OF STATE.

5. REFERRING TO HIS DILOLO VISIT, DURING WHICH HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY MOROCCAN FONMIN LARAKI, MOBUTU SAID EVEN THERE, RIGHT ON THE BORDER, THE INVADERS HAD FAILED TO PUT UP MUCH RESISTANCE OR TO COUNTERATTACK FROM ACROSS THE BORDER. HE SAID THAT DURING THE ATTACK ON DILOLO FAZ FORCES HAD ACCIDENTALLY SHELLED THE VICINITY OF TEIXEIRA DE SOUSA ON THE ANGOLAN SIDE OF THE FRONTIER, BUT THE CONFIDENTIAL

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ONLY RESPONSE HAD BEEN THE RAISING OF AN ANGOLACAN FLAG OVER THE TOWN. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUERY, MOBUTU SAID THAT WITH THE CAPTURE OF DILOLO THE MOROCCANS HAD NOW COMPLETED THEIR COMBAT OPERATIONS AND WOULD RETURN HOME VERY SOON -- NO LATER THAN JUNE 15.

6. AT THIS POINT MOBUTU SAID HE WANTED TO CONVEY TO ME SOME INFORMATION THAT HAD COME AS A SURPRISE TO HIM: WHEREAS HE HAD PREVIOUSLY BELIEVED THAT IT WAS THE SOVIETS WHO HAD PLANNED AND SUBSEQUENTLY PRESSED THE INVASION OF SHABA, HE HAD NOW LEARNED THAT THE CUBANS WERE THE MAIN INSTIGATORS OF THE ATTACK AND THAT THE SOVIETS HAD AGREED TO GO ALONG WITH IT ONLY TO THE EXTENT OF PROVIDING SOME ARMS AND AMMUNITION. THEN, WHEN THE MOROCCANS ENTERED THE FRAY AND CASTRO APPEALED TO MOSCOW FOR MORE HELP, THE SOVIETS TURNED HIM DOWN AND COUNSELED RESTRAINT. MOBUTU DID NOT ELABORATE BEYOND THIS POINT OR IDENTIFY THE SOURCE OF HIS INFORMATION; BUT THE INTENDED IMPLICATION SEEMED TO BE THAT HENCEFORTH THE GOZ WOULD HAVE REASON TO EASE UP ON ITS RELENTLESS ATTACKS ON THE SOVIETS AS THE MAIN CULPRITS IN THE SHABA AFFAIR.

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O P 231805Z MAY 77
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3712
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AMEMBASSY LAGOS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KINSHASA 4837

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
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7. TURNING TO BILATERAL RELATIONS, I SAID WHILE IN WASHINGTON I WOULD, OF COURSE, BE REVIEWING VARIOUS ASPECTS OF OUR ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, INCLUDING MILITARY AID WHICH IS NOW BEING DISCUSSED IN THE CONGRESS. IN RESPONSE TO MOBUTU'S QUERY AS TO WHERE THIS MATTER STANDS, I CONFIRMED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAD PROPOSED A \$30 MILLION LEVEL FOR FY 78 BUT THAT BOTH THE HOUSE AND SENATE COMMITTEES HAD SIGNALLED THEIR INTENTION TO PRESS FOR A REDUCTION. I NOTED THAT FY 77 FUNDING WAS NOT AFFECTED, AND THAT THE SHABA ATTACK SEEMED CLEARLY TO INDICATE ZAIRE'S CONTINUED NEED FOR SECURITY AS WELL AS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE. MOBUTU AGREED. WITHOUT SPECIFICALLY RAISING THE QUESTION OF THE STATUS OF OUR PROPOSED UPGRADE PACKAGE, HE OBSERVED THAT THE SHABA ATTACK DEMONSTRATED A PARTICULAR NEED FOR BETTER PROTECTION OF
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ZAIRE'S COPPER BELT.

8. MOBUTU THEN SAID THERE WAS ONE SIMPLE BUT IMPORTANT MESSAGE HE WISHED ME TO MAKE DURING MY FORTH COMING CONSULTATIONS IN WASHINGTON: HE HAS ALWAYS REGARDED THE US AS A CLOSE FRIEND AND HE CONTINUES TO VALUE OUR FRIENDSHIP; HOWEVER, AS A FRIEND HE HAS BEEN "DISAPPOINTED" BY OUR FAILURE TO GIVE ZAIRE FULL SUPPORT AT A TIME WHEN ITS SECURITY WAS SO SERIOUSLY AND DIRECTLY THREATENED BY AN ARMED INVASION. WHAT, AFTER ALL, WERE FRIENDS FOR IF NOT TO HELP EACH OTHER IN TIMES OF GREAT NEED? INSTEAD, OUR RESPONSE HAD BEEN SEVERELY LIMITED AND STUDDERED WITH ALL SORTS OF RESERVATIONS AND IMPLIED CRITICISMS. HE UNDERSTOOD MY POINT ABOUT THE SUDDEN ATTACK ON SHABA POSING DIFFICULT DECISIONS FOR THE NEW ADMINISTRATION ONLY TWO MONTHS AFTER TAKING OFFICE AND WHILE IT WAS STILL IN THE PROCESS OF FORMULATING ITS FOREIGN POLICIES. STILL, HE SAID, HE COULD NOT HIDE HIS DISAPPOINTMENT AT THE REACTIONS OF HIS AMERICAN FRIENDS.

9. CONTINUING, MOBUTU EXPRESSED DISMAY -- AS HE HAS SEVERAL TIMES BEFORE -- THAT SO MANY DIFFERENT AMERICAN OFFICIALS WERE MAKING SO MANY DIFFERENT AND AT TIMES SEEMINGLY CONFLICTING STATEMENTS ABOUT AFRICA. AND HE AGAIN CITED SEVERAL OF AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S STATEMENTS (CUBANS LENDING STABILITY TO ANGOLA, ADMIRATION FOR NETO, ETC.) AS CONTRIBUTING TO THE CONFUSION WHICH MOBUTU CLAIMED EXISTED AMONG MANY AFRICANS REGARDING CURRENT US POLICY AND INTENTIONS. I, IN TURN, AGAIN TRIED TO EXPLAIN THAT OUR NEW ADMINISTRATION WAS IN THE PROCESS OF REVIEWING AND FORMULATING POLICIES IN AS OPEN A FASHION AS POSSIBLE; THAT AMBASSADOR YOUNG WAS PLAYING AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THIS PROCESS, PARTICULARLY ON AFRICAN ISSUES; THAT HE HAD HIMSELF MADE CLEAR THAT NOT ALL OF HIS PUBLIC COMMENTS SHOULD BE INTERPRETED AS REFLECTING US POLICY POSITIONS; AND THAT HE HAD ALSO MADE CLEAR THAT A MAJOR REASON FOR HIS SPEAKING OUT WAS TO ENCOURAGE PUBLIC DIALOGUE ON MAJOR ISSUES AND THEREBY HELP OUR PRESIDENT FORMULATE A NATIONAL CONSENSUS ON THOSE ISSUES. MOBUTU LISTENED CAREFULLY AND SEEMED TO UNDERSTAND THE POINTS I WAS MAKING.

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10. COMMENT: AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME MOBUTU HAS CONVEYED TO ME BOTH HIS DISAPPOINTMENT THAT THE US DID NOT RESPOND MORE POSITIVELY TO HIS APPEAL FOR HELP IN COPING WITH THE SHABA CRISIS AND HIS CONCERN ABOUT SOME OF OUR RECENT OFFICIAL STATEMENTS. THIS TIME, HOWEVER, HE SPOKE MORE WITH RESIGNATION AND REGRET THAN WITH THE SHARP IRRITATION THAT CHARACTERIZED HIS COMPLAINTS IN SOME OF OUR PREVIOUS TALKS. IN FACT, HE SEEMED INTENT ON STRESSING THE POINT THAT, AS IN THE PAST, HE CONTINUES TO VALUE US FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION. WHILE THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT HE HAS BEEN GENUINELY DISAPPOINTED IF NOT SHAKEN

BY OUR VERY MEASURED RESPONSE TO HIS APPEALS FOR HELP, MOBUTU IS NO STRANGER TO OUR DOMESTIC SCENE AND I BELIEVE HE HAS COME TO UNDERSTAND SOME OF THE FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO CURRENT US ATTITUDES. HIS POLITICAL PRAGMATISM, AS WELL AS ZAIRE'S OBVIOUS NEED FOR OUR CONTINUED ASSISTANCE, PROBABLY WILL SERVE TO CHECK HIS REACTING TO THESE ATTITUDES MORE NEGATIVELY OR IRRATIONALLY THAN HE HAS SO FAR. BY THE SAME TOKEN, HIS COMMENTS CONCERNING THE SOVIETS SEEM TO REFLECT A DECISION NOT TO BURN THAT BRIDGE EITHER.
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Message Attributes

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